

*A high operational tempo, and frequent personnel turnover...
While in the background, a real threat looms*

ARMOR IN KOREA

by Captain Andrew T. Berkowitz

This article will provide the Armor Community an informed and thorough look at various aspects of an armor assignment to Korea. The scope of the article will include the Second Infantry Division, its organic armor units, major training events conducted on an annual basis, and the operational environment. Duty in Korea is among the best in the armor community due to the unique mission, training operational tempo, and combined operations with the Republic of Korea (ROK) Army, the force integration schedule, and the nature of the threat.

The 2nd Infantry Division is the most forwardly deployed heavy division in the U.S. Army. With a history dating from World War I and including extensive combat during the Korean War, the "Warrior Division" has been serving continuously on the peninsula since July 1965. In 1993, in accordance with international agreements signed by the United States, 2ID withdrew its forces from the Demilitarized Zone and formally handed over responsibility for that area of operations to ROK forces. Since then, the soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division have remained ever vigilant, ready to come to the immediate aid of our South Korean allies, if the need should arise.

Armor units of the division include the 1st Battalion, 72nd Armor Regiment (Crusader); the 2nd Battalion, 72nd Armor Regiment (Dragon Force); and the 4th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment (Sabre). Both battalions of the 72nd Armor are part of 1st Brigade (the "Iron Team") and are garrisoned at Camp Casey, which is approximately 18 miles north of Seoul and nine miles south of the DMZ. The division cavalry squadron, 4-7 CAV, conducts operations out of Camp Garry Owen, 13 miles west of Camp Casey.

The mission of the 1st (Iron) Brigade is quite distinct from other armor units. A real threat, the North Korea's armored forces, oppose the brigade just across the DMZ within the range of enemy conven-

tional artillery. Also, unlike most of our brothers-in-arms, the Iron Team trains and prepares for the "Defile Fight" against the North Koreans.

The defile fight is a sequential battle conducted in restricted terrain characterized by rugged mountains, steep ridges, and narrow valleys. Setting the platforms of C², fires, and intelligence are critical tasks that must be completed prior to the maneuver fight. Additionally, the restrictive terrain makes the fight a company/team battle. Main gun engagements of only 800 to 1000 meters are the norm with extensive obstacles, urbanization, and a vertical fight, as well as a horizontal one, characteristic of the defile.

Under the guidance of Col. Robert W. Mixon, Jr., the brigade commander, 1st Brigade routinely trains with teams at both battalion and company levels. The brigade-designed combined live-fire exercise and company/team external evaluation models are specifically built to tie the defile fight to maneuver training, gunnery, and the threat. Each battalion in the Iron Brigade conducts tank gunnery with a CALFEX of two company teams under task force control every six months in order to maintain crew and collective training proficiency.

With high personnel turnover and an unmatched OPTEMPO, armor junior officers and noncommissioned officers must remain in a narrow band of excellence to accomplish these challenging missions. The brigade has identified this imperative and established the Iron Team Leader Development Program to achieve these particular objectives. "Continued junior leader development is the key to our successful execution of platoon and company battle drills," said Mixon. These programs endeavor to immediately integrate the soldier into the Iron Team and increase his overall proficiency.

Duty in Korea has numerous benefits. Among them are some of the most challenging training events conducted by

armor units in today's Army. One of these events is FOAL EAGLE. This is a reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI) exercise in which a continental U.S.-based brigade deploys to the Korean peninsula and conducts force-on-force exercises with ROK forces. This year's training event marks the first time ROK forces will use the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES) and participate in a Combat Training Center-like force-on-force exercise that includes after-action reviews, a technique new and unfamiliar for ROK soldiers and officers.

Another significant training event is WARSTEED. This is an annual brigade-level field training exercise in which brigade headquarters and battalions receive external evaluations. The division also conducts various command post exercises throughout the year. These exercises include WARSTRIKE (division level), WARFIGHTER/BCBST (a brigade level WARFIGHTER), SUMMER-EX (an Eighth Army CPX), and ULCHI FOCUS LENS (the largest theater training event in Korea).

One of the great benefits of armor duty in Korea is the chance to work with the Army's latest technology. All units of the Warrior Division are upgrading, improving, and modernizing individual soldier systems, vehicles, and weapons platforms.

With the introduction of the tactical local area network (TACLAN) and website automated reporting systems, the Warrior Division is again poised at the technological forefront of our Army. TACLAN provides data connectivity in a field environment via a secure LAN system. It allows spot reports, situation reports, logistical statistics, and other information to be sent from division staff to all major subordinate command and separate battalion tactical operations centers.

The TACWEB system is a secure tactical website for use by the division's

commanding general and his subordinate commanders. It provides key decision-makers with a real-time picture of the battlefield and allows instantaneous access to critical information.

In the arena of firepower, 2ID armor units recently fielded the XM908 tank round. This obstacle-reducing round can destroy rock drops, bridge abutments, most armor vehicles, bunkers, and has tremendous potential for military operations in urban terrain. Also, it is of interest to note, soldiers of the Iron Team developed the Army-wide tactics, techniques and procedures for using this round. (See photos below. —Ed.)

Another distinct characteristic of the Warrior Division is the Korean Augmentees To the United States Army, or KATUSA program. KATUSAs are Korean soldiers assigned to U.S. Army units and make up approximately 10 percent of the Warrior Division's force in Korea. These soldiers play an essential role as a combat multiplier for our armor units and are assigned for two years while most U.S. soldiers serve one-year tours. To become a KATUSA, Korean draftees must pass an initial exam showing English language proficiency. Upon successful completion of ROK basic training and acceptance into the program, KATUSAs complete the remainder of their enlistment with a U.S. Army unit. Our soldiers train the KATUSAs on American weap-

ons systems, vehicles, and doctrine. They also participate in all training conducted and experienced by U.S. soldiers. As a result, KATUSAs and U.S. soldiers develop strong friendships laboring together daily and sharing common duties. Further, it is not unusual for an American to visit a Korean home for dinner or for a Korean to be secure in the knowledge that he has a place to stay, should he visit the United States.

In addition to working with KATUSAs, U.S. soldiers train in a combined environment with ROK soldiers during FOAL EAGLE, ULCHI FOCUS LENS, and, for the first time next year, tank gunnery. The 5th Republic of Korea Armor Brigade is attached to 2ID and will fight side by side with Iron Team soldiers. The discipline, work ethic, and maintenance standards of 5th RAB are unmatched. During a recent tank gunnery, they had no vehicle breakdowns and only two mechanical failures, both on coax machineguns. With a numerically superior communist threat just to the north, they maintain the highest readiness levels and are prepared to execute combat operations on short notice.

The largest and most critical continuing challenge is how to maintain our leaders in the Band of Excellence while sustaining high personnel turnover. The significant amount of effort we devote to programs like our Leader Development

Workshops are key to maintaining high levels of leader performance.

An armor assignment in Korea differs in many ways from other assignments. From the mission to major training events, the tour presents great opportunities to excel in a real threat environment. The bottom line to training in Korea is that after a year of fire and maneuver in challenging terrain, almost all soldiers agree that Korea offers an outstanding opportunity to tank as part of a mobile and lethal combined arms team. With an enemy just on the other side of the DMZ, U.S. forces in Korea are a significant, credible deterrent to the communist threat.

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Testing the New XM 908 Obstacle-Reducing Tank Round



Photo sequence shows effect of the new round on a typical Korean "rock drop" obstacle, seen intact at upper left. Obstacle blocks have dropped in lower left photo, which shows size of the blocks compared to standing soldiers. Above, the rubble left after demolition by the new XM908 round.